

Head Start

In Tennessee the Head Start program is administered by the Head Start Bureau in the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Grants are awarded by the DHHS Regional Offices and the Head Start Bureau's American Indian and Migrant Program branches to local public agencies, private non-profit organizations, and school systems for the purpose of operating Head Start programs at the community level.

Head Start Programs in Tennessee have led the way for setting high standards for children in an early childhood learning experience through:

- Having 90 percent of their teachers with degrees in early childhood education or having the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or a state certificate to teach in a pre-school setting.
- Establishing home-based schooling programs in seven regions serving 414 children.
- Employing parents of former Head Start Students.
- Providing an early socialization/education experience for a total of 14,264 children per year.
- Providing an early education experience for children of low income families who otherwise would not receive this service.

Early Head Start. In 1998 several existing Head Start Programs in Tennessee became the recipients of grant money to provide a new program, the Early Head Start Program, designed for low income families with infants and toddlers. During the fiscal year 1999 the Early Head Start Program provided care for 490 infants and toddlers in these areas in Tennessee.

The Community-Based Early Head Start programs are founded on nine principles:

1. **High Quality.** A commitment to developing policies and practices that are founded in the knowledge, skills, and professional ethics embraced by the fields of child development.
2. **Prevention and Promotion.** The proactive promotion of healthy child development and family functioning with emphasis on detecting developmental concerns at the earliest possible time.
3. **Positive Relationships and Continuity.** The idea that strong positive relationships that continue over time are key elements in a high quality program. Also, that the relationship between staff and family is based on respect for the child and family's home culture.
4. **Parent Involvement.** The Early Head Start initiative supports the highest level of parent involvement and partnership. Programs recognize the parent as the child's primary nurturer and advocate.

Tennessee 1999 Early Head Start Enrollment
Broken Out by County and Grant Recipient

County	Grant Recipient	Enrollment
Anderson	Bd. of Education	32
Knox	Community Action Committee	32
Hamilton	City of Chattanooga HR	50
Cannon	Mid-Cum. Community Action Agency	5
Cheatham	Mid-Cum. Community Action Agency	5
Robertson	Mid-Cum. Community Action Agency	8
Rutherford	Mid-Cum. Community Action Agency	16
Sumner	Mid-Cum. Community Action Agency	8
Trousdale	Mid-Cum. Community Action Agency	5
Wilson	Mid-Cum. Community Action Agency	8
Williamson	Mid-Cum. Community Action Agency	5
Roan	Community Action Agency	20
Louden	Mid-East Community Action Agency	16
Shelby	Porter-Leath Children's Center	60
Bellford	S. Central Human Resource Agency	20
Giles	S. Central Human Resource Agency	24
Lawrence	S. Central Human Resource Agency	16
Carroll	North West Economic Development Council	8
Fayette	North West Economic Development Council	12
Lauderdale	North West Economic Development Council	16
Madison	North West Economic Development Council	19
Obion	North West Economic Development Council	12
Tipton	North West Economic Development Council	8
Gibson	TN State University	17
Henry	TN State University	27
Weakley	TN State University	41
		Total 490

Source: US Department of Health and Human Services

5. **Inclusion.** Programs welcome children with disabilities, putting emphasis on their their own needs and strengths, set their own goals, and are capable of growth.
8. **Transitions.** Committed to facilitating a smooth transition from Early Head Start into Head Start or other high quality programs and support services.
9. **Collaboration.** Collaboration with local community agencies and service providers to maximize the resources available for families.